

Philadelphia 1754
Bishop Chase's Address,

AT THE CLOSE OF THE

CONVENTION

OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

IN CINCINNATI, OHIO,

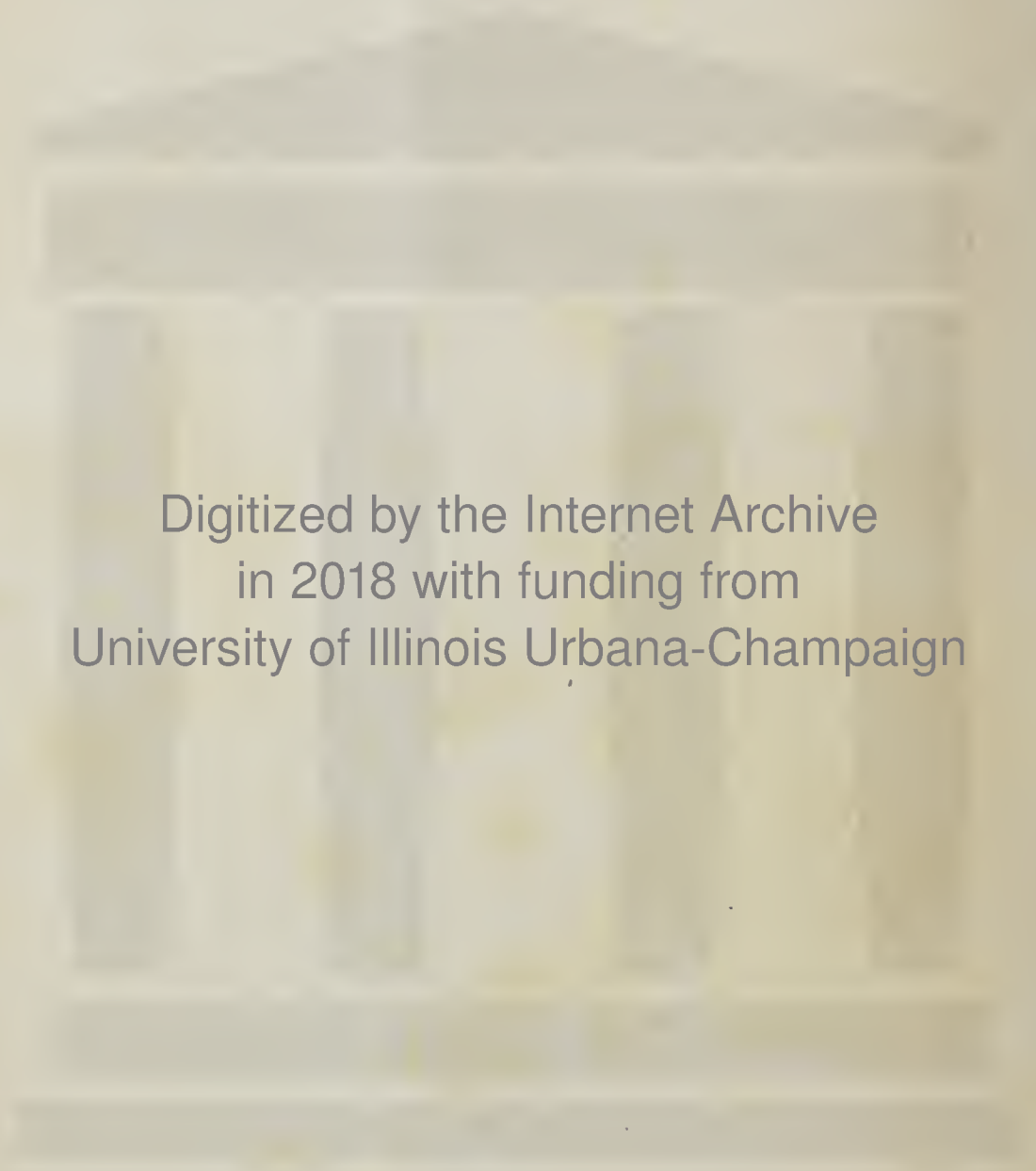
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A D D R E S S .

Dear Brethren in the Lord :

WHATEVER are the trials and discouragements with which the Church of God hath of late had to contend—(and they have been many and grievous,)—the Origin of them all is *sin*. They spring from one and the same source, the great Enemy of our souls, who, by tempting man to sin, brought death into the world; and who now, accomplishes his work, by a second death, in the same way.

It doth not discourage him to know that God reigneth; nor that He hath sent His Son into the world to die for man's transgression, and that the Gospel tidings are published: "Who-soever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." So long as he is permitted to enter the Church, as he did the first Paradise, he resorts to the same ways and means of effecting his purpose. "Thou shalt not surely die" is still his constant theme. His unceasing effort is to lull the risings of conscience, to create doubts, to beget unbelief in God's Word, and to give the passions which war against the redeemed soul an uncontrolled license.

This is a general view of the Enemy's work to destroy a redeemed world; and his success is written in its history. What has come within our own view, and in our own country, shows us, there is but little mitigation in his successful ravages. "Ye shall not surely die" is still whispered in every ear. When you ask, Who told them so? They say it is written in the Bible, though they seldom read it, nor care to distinguish who spoke the tempting words, whether the Saviour or the Destroyer; it matters nothing to them. They have a light within which is above the written word. This is said by a

General 6 Dec 1945 Dale Patman

great portion of such as call themselves Christians. There is something under the lids of the Bible which we discover by our natural perception of things: and though it contradict what is plainly declared there, “yet we think”—[and our thoughts being wiser and better than God’s declarations]—“*we think* all men will be happy in the Eternal World, do what they list in this.” How widely spread is this fatal delusion throughout our country, yourselves can judge.

But it is not our aim to extend our observation, to professed infidels out of the Church of God. We would rather confine our speech to those within her pale; and these, for this very reason, are the chief objects of the Tempter’s wiles.

We will address several classes as we go along. First, *rich men*, who call themselves *Churchmen*; such we now address.

All things being possible with God, we will not despair even of your salvation. But when you duly reflect on what our Blessed Saviour hath said concerning you, “That it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,” you must feel alarmed at your present dangerous condition in the Church of God; you ought to see that without repentance of this idolatry of wealth, the gold in your pockets will be the very cause of your sinking, not to temporal but eternal death.

If you feel unaffected at this true representation of your case, you have no reasonable cause for triumph; for ’tis but a plain illustration of the truth of our Saviour’s words, signifying that you can not be saved in any *ordinary* way: for there is nothing in the promises of the Gospel, on which you can depend. It is a miracle only which can save you—a miracle of Grace, so strongly and clearly set forth, as by a camel’s going through the eye of a needle. Something that comes without promise, or the use of ordinary means—some sudden visitation from Heaven—the entire loss of your health—the death of your dearest friends, or the deprivation of all your earthly comforts. Through eternity you will have cause to praise the God of love, if saved you be through trials, even such as these.

If this direct appeal to our Saviour’s words, seem offensive to you, let us take our course of argument through the paths

of the Church. In your baptism, you “renounced the world.” The least that can be said here, is that you renounced it as your governing principle of life. Now, is it not clear the world through the influence of your riches doth govern *you*, and not you *it*? Are not your chief thoughts bestowed and your best affections placed on your riches? Many of you are respected in society, and some of you hold chief stations in the Church—[the more the pity for her if you be covetous]—but these elevations will not save you in the day of visitation. If you be idolatrous of your wealth, and think of your sums of gold more than you think of God, remember that God himself hath declared that he is a “*Jealous God* ;” and as a married man watcheth over the affections of his bride, even so doth the Saviour watch over the hearts of all who are betrothed to *Him* in *Baptism*. If they give that love to another which he claimeth as his own, his wrath is kindled, and will be sure to punish your *treachery*.

If you deny all this, and appeal to the evidence of your charities and oblations to His Church, let us reason together on *this* also.

Have your oblations to maintain the Gospel, and your offerings to support the wretched, been in proportion to your wealth? How often have you “turned your face from the poor man,” and refused “to open your hand wide unto him,” as the great Donor of your riches hath commanded you? When the collection was being made, how often have your liberal friends blushed to see the meagerness of your donations?

If you say these are not the proper occasions to display your donations before men, we ask where are the evidences of your anonymous subscriptions? Do they keep pace with your income? Are they adequate to the increasing wants of the Church of God? Look at your splendid mansions and the extravagance of their furniture. Look at your accumulating stocks and overflowing dividends in the banks and other companies. If you keep these secret from men, God sees them; and weighs the vast debt you owe, for even the tithe of the interest of the sum he hath lent you; yes, we say, “*lent to you*” as stewards, accountable for every dollar to your Heavenly

Lord. When our Church is suffering above all others in lack of means to redeem her pledge to maintain missionaries ; when the overflowing wealth of her members is known and acknowledged by all, can the ministers of God be guiltless in keeping silence ?

The inspired Apostle, when dwelling on a subject of a similar nature, records for our instruction these awakening words, "Go to now, ye rich men : weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten : your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you : and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth : and the cries of them which have reaped, are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." Jas. v. 1-4. Those faithful missionaries who have labored in God's field, are surely of this number : and we forewarn you of the account you will have to give for keeping back their stipulated hire.

But the sin of idolizing wealth is not the only means by which the enemy of redeemed souls fulfills his purposes. The enticements of Pleasure must not be forgotten.

To judge rightly on this subject we have recourse to the Word of God.

We remember the parable of the Ten Virgins ; five were wise and five were foolish. The wise took oil in their lamps, and, waiting patiently for the bridegroom, were admitted to the marriage. The foolish, neglecting this duty, were rejected with the awful sentence, "*I know you not.*"

Now, if we understand by the "oil in the lamps," *true religion*, such as Jesus taught in its purity—*faith* in Him who died to redeem mankind from guilt, a faith which worketh by love to God and obedience to his commands, manifesting good will towards men, especially those who are of our own household : we have a rule to go by, in discriminating between the true and false members of the Church of Christ, of an unerring character.

In opposition to this rule, have not the customs of the world,

in search of *Pleasure* introduced, (in the hearts of many,) *false rules* of Christian morality? Do not a great proportion of those, who have not yet renounced the name of Christ's disciples, manifest, by their conduct, that they give their hearts to something else beside the Bridegroom of the Church, for whose second coming they profess to be waiting? Are there not many who "are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" who redeemed them by the blood of his Son? Many who vie with each other in worldly expenses of every sort; while they give little heed to the sufferings of their fellow Christians, and still less to the wants of the Church of God? Is it not true now, as in the days of our Lord, that "many are called but few chosen:" even a less proportion than that mentioned in the parable? If you, for whose sakes these words are spoken, think this a harsh judgment, try the question by the express rule of God's word. "My son, give me thine heart." "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." "Except ye repent and be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God." "He that denieth not himself, and taketh not up his cross and followeth me, is not worthy of me." And doth your spirit witness with God's Spirit that you do this? Doth the sense of your inward piety testify that you love God with all your heart, with all your mind, and with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourselves? Doth this testimony keep pace with your professions of Religion?

Let sober and right-minded Christian persons go to our Watering-places and other scenes of general resort, and try to distinguish between true disciples and false professors: those who verify that they have oil in their lamps, and those who have suffered it heedlessly to waste away: those who watch and wait for their Lord's coming; and those, on the contrary, who are heedless of the coming judgment; and run into all the extravagancies of worldly pleasure, forgetful of the approach of their heavenly Bridegroom.

We are aware that but a very small proportion of our communion have wealth to defray the expenses of attending on scenes like these; yet it should not be forgotten that small as

the proportion is, the number consists of the most influential in society ; and their example, for this reason, has a sad effect on the many who hear, by report, of the liberties there taken, to change and degrade the Christian character. Was it not in this way that the sons of God, the true descendants of Seth, “who called on the name of the Lord,” were corrupted by a wicked world to such a degree, as that “it grieved the Lord that he had made man ;” and brought in the Flood “to destroy all flesh from the face of the earth,” saving only one family ?

Who can be insensible to the great danger the children of God are in, when unprincipled men, great only by their riches, bear sway and rule in forming the morals of our country ? The more elevated the example, the farther will its influence extend. The great, the rich, the educated, and talented part of our community have much to answer for in this way.

Let them remember that man’s nature, as such, is corrupt. All are inclined to evil : and the loose customs of those in higher ranks are sure to be imitated ; and when “the *head* is sick,” “the whole heart is faint,” till all sense of pure religion seems to be lost. Instead of that Christian character drawn out by the Son of God, so chaste, so pure, so heavenly, all “her motions being dignity and love,” you see the daubings of outward show, heedless of purity within ; the garnishing of the sepulchres of the saints, while all is unsanctified within their own bosoms.

If it be said that God’s vindictive judgments on the Antediluvian world for sin are softened by the mild mercy of the Christian religion ; that the bow in the cloud is a witness that God no more will destroy all flesh by a flood : Let it be promptly replied that toleration of sin is not the lesson we are to learn from His merciful forbearance. On the contrary, the greater and more spiritual His blessings, their abuse is the more severely punished ; and when the Christian Church offends Him by her sins, there are other ways of bringing her to an account for her transgressions, than by drowning the world a second time.

Much as we prize our pure forms and the Apostolic constitution of our Church, all will be as nothing, or serve but to

enhance our guilt, if we lose our "*first love*." Where now are the Churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

They were planted by the Apostles themselves, and governed by Bishops, called "*Angels*," and once shone forth in the brightness of unclouded faith and exemplary godliness. Yet, by sinning grievously against the Lord, they were counted as those who "had a name to live, but were dead:" Rev. iii. 1 and 17, they said "they were rich and increased in goods, and had need of nothing," being unconscious the while that they were "wretched and miserable and poor, and blind and naked" before God. They remained deaf to the voice which said, "I will kill her children with death: and all the Churches shall know that I am He, which searcheth the reins and heart; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." Rev. ii. 23. We ask again: Where are those Churches now? Buried in oblivion—so that the very cities where they were built cannot but with difficulty be found. These are instances, long since the Flood, of God's anger against sin. Oh, that we could take warning, be zealous and repent before it be too late!

Your presiding Bishop, who addresses the Church in this way, "has heard that there be divisions among you, and he partly believes it," and would heartily repent if he in any wise have been the means of it.

But aside from the fact, we all are fully aware from whence the evil hath come; even from the machinations of the Author of all sin, the great destroyer of our souls. By tracing him to his den, we may discover his footsteps to be the same as those with which he deceived our first Parents, by putting falsehood in the place of truth; by making the eye deceive the heart; by "doing evil that good may come of it."

If ever there were a time when these things were too manifest to require proof, it is the present.

Look at the whole system of turning our pure primitive Church over to the adulterous embraces of the Church of Rome.

How many hath it deceived! Surely "an enemy hath done this." An enemy not without the camp, but in the very bosom

of the Protestant Church, purified from the defilements of Rome by the blood of her forefathers. What would the venerable founders of our American Church say, were they to arise from their graves and behold the enemy against whom, as an open foe, they contended so faithfully, now within and mingling with her members, endeavoring to change the character of honest Protestant churchmen, into that of "*Italian Deceivers* and Roman Jesuits, who *kiss the marble statue of Jupiter with St. Peter's head, and give the honor to the *creature* which is due only the Creator. To the nature of ordinary crime their judicious minds would add that of the basest TREASON.

This is no visionary statement. The Articles framed for the defence of the Protestant Episcopal Church are, by the insidious foe, made to speak a language the very reverse of their original design ; and the Holy Scriptures themselves are made to give place to the authority of oral tradition, in the interpretation of the meaning of the Sacraments, in a manner never witnessed in primitive days. These facts constitute a system of deception hitherto unequalled in America. Inso-much that the Romanists themselves have expressed their astonishment, that more of their work had been effected in a few years by internal intrigue, than they had achieved by centuries of open warfare. To account for this, the mind is naturally led to a similar transaction in olden days ; especially the sin of Achan, wherein God saw what man did not see, a secret sin of deception and falsehood, and suffered the enemy to prevail against his people Israel, till it was purged away by public confession. Evident it is that the Protestant character has been affected deeply by the deception alluded to. And when we in this country ask why the divine presence hath been refused us, so that our faithful soldiers of the cross seem not to be sustained and blessed in the preaching of the Gospel, in subduing sin and Satan, the answer is, "there is sin in the camp." As God said unto Joshua when mourning over the discomfiture of his people : "Israel hath sinned, for they

* Lord Kenyon affirmed to the author, that he saw with his own eyes this sad spectacle of human degradation in St. Peter's Church, Rome, and that the moisture of breath congealed by the cold marble, had wet the floor all around.

have taken of the accursed thing ; and have also stolen and dissembled ; and have put it even among their stuff." Joshua, vii. 11. A very few years ago, the Protestant Episcopal Church in these United States of America, was in a peaceful and prosperous condition. Witness the unanimity with which all entered into the great work of a General Missionary Society. Every baptized person was declared a member thereof ; and all, from the least to the greatest, covenanted before God and one another, to spread the Gospel, according to the Articles and Liturgy of our primitive Church, throughout the world, especially the West of our own dear country, whither (so to speak,) all the world was pressing. And what stopped this blessed work ? Why did the righteous God refuse to go forth with our armies of faithful missionaries ? Why were they discomfited, so that the "men of Ai," the least and most contemptible of our foes, oppose and triumph over us ? The answer is, we have greatly sinned, by suffering enemies within our camp ; and suffered "a lying spirit to go forth in our midst, unsettling old truths, and covering with new sophistry exploded errors, to entice the unwary to embrace them, thus forcing our youths to feed on legendary tales of the dark ages."

This system of deception, to all human view, is among the great sins which have caused the Lord to withdraw the light of his benignant countenance. To it we attribute our divisions in general, and especially that great evil alluded to—the unhappy partial discomfiture of our glorious missionary army. Certain it is, that on hearing of the rumors of our Romanizing tendencies, distrust in many places prevailed in the minds of those who had always given most liberally to the missionary cause. Thus the fountain from which our missionaries drew their chief support, was in a measure dried up ; and our Church held up to the world as one recreant to her solemn vows.

These are melancholy facts ; and inasmuch as all have suffered by them, all ought to repent and implore the divine mercy. This would be a confession worthy of the Christian name. To any individuals who feel themselves implicated, let *conscience* bring to the heart the words of Joshua to Achan,

“My son,” said he to the guilty person, “give, I pray thee, the glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to *Him*.”

In all this there is left abundant room to say with truth, that the great body of our Church have not sinned; it is the Achans who have troubled the Israel of your God. The main body of the Church, both of the clergy and laity, are *honest men*, unscathed by Romanizing principles. Believing in what they have professed from their childhood, the Holy Scriptures translated by the Church of England, and handed down to them by their pious ancestors, they remain firm friends and supporters of the Word of God, as the only *Rule of Christian Faith*. These, embracing a vast majority of our primitive communion, have never for a moment understandingly and willingly listened to the false glosses which a Romanizing few are secretly introducing to destroy the protestant character of the Church. And if party policy, or individual friendship, have kept any silent, it was seldom from a conviction of the truth of anything they have heard. All who are acquainted with the real principles of the Church of Rome, have shuddered, and still shudder at the thought of going so near her as to be in danger of falling into her embraces.

It ought to cheer us to reflect that our knowledge of her defilements being now more generally known than when her insidious attacks began, we have reason to believe that an aversion to her communion has in proportion greatly increased; so that were the question to be taken concerning the Romanizing tendencies contained in what are termed the Oxford Tracts and similar publications, the same would be expelled from our Church.

Dear Brethren in the Lord:

In drawing to a close these remarks, there remains to be mentioned but one more instance of the temptations of the enemy. It is that of persuading Christians to believe that this world is of more consequence in conferring true happiness, than God ever intended it should be; and that the splendors of His

outward Church on earth, are the chief things that should employ our attention in seeking His glory: thus over-shadowing the great realities which await us in the eternal world. “Ye shall not surely die,” saith the tempter: “Give all your attention to this world: eat its fruits, and drink of the juice of the grape, irrespective of God’s commands. Think not of the shortness of human life, or if you think at all, let the very thought be an incentive to enjoy your cups with double greediness. Take your fill, unheeding of the shame you bring on your cloth or your profession, while they last. And as you call yourselves members and perhaps ministers at God’s altars, be so in welcome—if its outward splendors and not its inward purity engage your whole attention. If your hearts can be set on the shadows instead of the great *Realities* of Religion; on the emblems instead of the substance; if you can content your souls in feasting on the rich ornaments of your churches, instead of cultivating that ‘meek and gentle spirit which is of great price in the sight of God:’ If you can believe that the outward part of the Sacraments is all which is required, forgetting that the letter killeth while the Spirit alone it is which giveth life: If you can persuade yourselves that what you see on God’s table is God himself, and that what you do is meritorious in his sight, then be Churchmen in welcome—‘*Ye shall not surely die.*’ ”

Brethren, you must see the danger of listening for a moment to such temptations as these. From what is past in the history of God’s Church, it is plain you must see that this is a dangerous path, leading to eternal death; and from what God’s Word hath taught us of what that death will consist, you must learn the awful consequences. Our blessed Saviour saw it all depicted in the case of the unhappy Jews. They believed that their temple at Jerusalem was holy because of its outward splendors. They believed that their sacrifices atoned for sin because of their outward solemnity—and rejected their true Messiah because he was meek and lowly in heart. He saw their guilt, and lamented their doom. When he came and beheld the city, he wept over it saying, “O, Jerusalem! Jerusalem!

if thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things belonging unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes.”

That city now is destroyed, and that Temple has not one stone upon another.

Since the Gospel has been preached, even to us Gentiles, what hath chiefly prevented its success in converting the souls of men from sin to holiness, but listening to the self-same deceptive doctrine—a doctrine which would persuade us to dwell chiefly on outward things, to cleanse the outside of the cup, unconscious of the dregs within? Look at the whole ritual of the Church of Rome, full of idolatrous adoration of saints, and bowing down to a creature-god; look, and then compare with it the pure worship required in the Holy Scriptures, and set forth in our Protestant Prayer Book. And where hath that corrupt communion ended, but in profound ignorance of all true and spiritual religion? Look at her late, seemingly insane attempts to ingratiate herself with the blind populace of Italy, by false miracles and lying wonders. Are not these signs of our times, prognostics of the speedy coming of our Lord to judgment. “When the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith upon the earth?” He will not find faith upon the earth. How awful to reflect that this sign seems so exactly with the fact!

Dear Brethren in the Lord, and ye friends of the Protestant Episcopal Church throughout the United States of America:

Your Presiding Bishop, feeling himself as unworthy as he is well stricken in years, cannot repress the expression of his deep sense of the importance of the subjects on which he has treated, and with all humility prostrates his soul before the God of the spirits of all flesh, imploring His heavenly grace, that you may kindly receive, and duly improve what he hath, in the fear of God, placed before you.

That there is reason to believe God is angry with us for our sins, is but too apparent. The late defections from her

pure and apostolical communion, to join the most corrupted portion of God's Church on earth, a portion who, by stated, unchangeable decrees, anathematizes all who are without her pale for not partaking with her in all her guilt—the flagrant transgression of the divine laws among our own people; the coldness and indifference with which many regard the inward and spiritual grace of our holy profession; and the recklessness in which the higher classes of society pursue the pleasures of this world, regardless of the account they must give of their time, talents, and wealth, to God, the Eternal Judge, in the world to come; all, all show there is imperious necessity of deep repentance and heartfelt prayer, lest our very name as a living Church be blotted out with that of “all the nations that forget God.” With holy Daniel, praying for his people suffering the anger of an offended God, even so let us intercede for the good of our spiritual Jerusalem.

O Lord! to us belongs confusion of face, because we have sinned against thee. O Lord our God, incline thine ear and hear, open thine eyes and behold our desolations. We do not present our supplications before thee for *our* righteousness, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear, O Lord, forgive, O Lord, hearken, and do. Defer not, for thine own sake, O our God! for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

And will not the God of Daniel hear those who call upon him, in true faith of His son's name, Jesus Christ our Lord. Yea, He will. And to quicken our prayers in behalf of our own part of the Universal Church, let us bring constantly before our minds, what our Lord himself hath said touching the whole matter of this discourse, showing that our doctrine doth not proceed from human, but divine authority.

“The field is the world—the good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world. The reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend

and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear let him hear.”

AMEN.